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The Grand Rapids Public Library

West Side Branch

Issued in connection with the public inspection and the opening of the

West Side Branch Library

December 28 and 30, 1907

IT will be of interest to those who visit this branch library to know something of its history and equipment. The building was erected by the Michigan State Telephone Company to be used as a telephone exchange, but owing to a change in the plans of the Company it was never fully equipped for that purpose, and for several years had been standing idle. As early as January, 1905, the Board of Library Commissioners considered the possibility of having the building for a branch library, and the President of the Board, the late Hon. John Patton, discussed the matter at different times with the officers of the Company. Early in 1907 the Telephone Company offered to the Library Board the use of the building for library purposes exclusively for a term of years ending February 1, 1924, on condition that the city maintain the building, pay the special and other taxes which may be assessed against it, and provide for fire insurance, the Company reserving, however, the right to maintain a telephone booth in the building. This offer was in the form of a lease which, under the provision of the City Charter, was made with the Board of Education, inasmuch as that Board holds the title to all library property.

The matter of providing funds for insurance, street improvement taxes, and fitting up the building was referred to the Common Council, which, at its meet-

ing on March 25, 1907, authorized a special appropriation of $2,115 for this purpose. The lease with the Telephone Company was authorized and signed by the Board of Education at its meeting on April 2. The bringing about of this lease on such satisfactory terms for the city was largely due to the efforts of Mr. Dudley E. Waters, vice-president of the Telephone Company.

As soon as the lease was effected, plans were begun for the remodeling of the building, its equipment for library purposes and the purchase of books to stock the library. All this work, together with a considerable amount of repairs, is now completed and ready for inspection. The plans involved the endeavor to use every available inch for seating readers or for the shelving of books. With the working out of the plans it was found advisable to add several important features which were not included on the original estimate for the equipment of the building. As a result of this, the cost has been several hundred dollars more than the original estimate. The most important of these additions are the glass partition and the double rows of shelving which divide the two reading rooms and the placing of cork carpet on the floor.

The number of books upon the open shelves is not as great as was hoped, owing to the fact that two additional new branch libraries were stocked and started this year. However, there are at this

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date about 2,000 volumes on the shelves and a large number of volumes have been ordered to be purchased as fast as the funds of the library will permit.

Fifty current periodicals for the reading room have been ordered for 1908. This list includes a wide range of subjects, and represented in it, in addition to English, are periodicals in the Holland, German and Polish languages.

Nearly all the books are for circulation, and anyone who now has a card to draw books from the Grand Rapids Public Library can take books from this branch. Cards are good to draw books from the Ryerson Library building and from any of the branches, provided the books already drawn be returned to the library from which they were taken. The rules with reference to the issue of books are the same as at the Ryerson Library building. The citizens on the West Side can use the Ryerson building the same as heretofore, and likewise anyone in any part of the city can use the West Side Branch.

The library will be open every week day from 12:30 until 9 p. m., except on Saturdays, when it will be open from 8:30 a. m. to 9 p. m. On Sundays and holidays, except Christmas and the Fourth of July, it will be open from 2 to 6 p. m. The hours of opening may be changed in the future should other hours seem desirable. The building can seat about 100 readers.